

*Washington, DC* -- American workers who build solar panels received a big boost this past weekend as President Obama signed into law a provision authored by Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), which requires that any solar energy panels purchased by the Department of Defense through subcontracts are made in the U.S. The amendment was included as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011, which after months of delay was approved by both the House and Senate.

"As the Department of Defense purchases solar panels to address very serious energy security concerns at defense installations around the country, we must ensure that those purchases support American solar energy manufacturing jobs, including those here in New York, rather than Chinese and other competitors," Hinchey said. "There is no good reason a company in China should be building the solar equipment that our military will use when we have a strong, emerging solar manufacturing presence here in New York. Establishing real energy security at our defense installations is critical to our national security. This is a commonsense approach to ensuring that American manufacturing jobs are supported as the military makes key investments in renewable energy."

Hinchey's amendment, which initially was added to the bill when the House first voted on the measure in May 2010, deals with the Buy American Act, which requires products purchased directly by the federal government to contain at least 50 percent of American content. The Hinchey amendment applies the Buy American Act to the procurement of solar panels purchased indirectly by the Pentagon through subcontracts such as Energy Savings Performance Contracts, land leases, and utility service contracts.